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REMARKS

The last Office Action has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 21, 26 and 27 are rejected as obvious over the patent to Delf in view of the patent to Savage.

With the present Amendment applicant has amended some claims, and it is respectfully submitted that the new feature of the present invention as defined in the claims are not disclosed in the references and can not be derived from them as a matter of obviousness.

In his rejection of the claims, the Examiner indicated that Delf did not disclose a spring element formed as a circular cup spring that was open on one side. Such a spring, contrary to the Examiner's opinion also is not disclosed in the patent to Savage. The spring 56 in the patent to Savage is a conical metal spring with a central coaxial opening, as explained in column 2, line 64 to column 3, line 12. The spring 46 in the patent to Savage is placed with its central opening over the shaft 34 and clamped by the nut 44 relative against the slaving element. A spring which is open on one side is not disclosed and not mentioned in the patent to Savage. The Examiner's

attention is respectfully submitted that it is respectfully directed to the fact that in the patent to Savage Figure 1 is a cross section, from which it can not be derived that the spring element is a cup spring that is open on one side. Also, the description of this reference does not contain any hint or suggestion for such a design of the spring element as now of the present application.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that a combination of the teachings of the patents to Delf and the patent to Savage would not lead to the applicant's invention as defined in claim 21. Claim 21 therefore should be considered as patentably distinguishing over the art represented by these two references.

It is further respectfully submitted that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have no reason to integrate a one piece spring element, which can be considered as obvious from the patent to Savage, into an arrangement disclosed in the patent to Delf. In the patent to Delf it is clearly stated that no direct vibration contact must be provided between the slaving element and the add-on part. Exactly for these reasons Savage proposes a multi-part, for example multi-component uncoupling and dampening system. If a person of ordinary skill in the art used a one-piece spring claimed in the present application as a replacement of the components 37

and 25 and 36 in the arrangement disclosed in the patent to Delf, then a swinging contact between the slaving element and the add-on part, intended to be avoided, will be produced. Starting from the objective of the patent to Delf, a person of ordinary skill in the art would be explicitly discouraged to use a one piece spring in this arrangement.

Contrary to the opinion of the Examiner, these elements, in other words the spring 47 of the patent to Savage and the combination of the components 37 and 25 and 36 of the patent to Delf do not represent any equivalents, since the spring 46 in the patent to Savage does not solve the problems underline the invention disclosed in the patent to Delf. The question is why a person of ordinary skill in the art would use the spring of the patent to Savage in the arrangement disclosed in the patent to Delf. For a person of ordinary skill it is not obvious to replace components 37 and 25 and 36 by another component 46. In order to solve the problem in the patent to Delf it is required to use not only a one-piece spring, but to the contrary a complex combination of components 37 and 25 and 36 arranged one behind the other, to avoid a vibration transmission between the slaving element and the add-on part.

The opinion of the Examiner that it would be obvious for a person of ordinary skill in the art to exchange these components with one another represents an impermissible hindsight, which he used to make a conclusion about such an equivalency. Neither the patent to Delf, nor the patent to Savage can provide for a person of ordinary skill in the art any hint or suggestion for exchanging the components with one another. Moreover, if a person of ordinary skill in the art familiarized himself with the objective of the invention disclosed in the patent to Delf, he would be absolutely discouraged to use the solution disclosed in the patent to Savage.

The replacement of the components 37 and 25 and 26 disclosed in the patent to Delf by a one-piece spring element 46 disclosed in the patent to Savage, can not be considered as obvious also for further reasons. The question is why a person of ordinary skill in the art would replace exactly the components 37 and 25 and 36 by a spring element 46 of the patent to Savage, and not mere the components 25 and 36? The components 37 disclosed in the patent to Delf is a washer which has no spring action. If a person of ordinary skill in the art wanted to replace the uncoupling element by a patent to Delf of the spring element as shown in the patent to Savage (for which replacement the person of ordinary skill in the art has no hint or suggestion whatsoever as explained herein above), then

he would replace only the damping components 25 and 36 by the spring 46. The components 37, in other words the washer, would be retained in the device disclosed in the patent to Delf. However spring element would not be located between the slaving element and the add on part, as defined in claim 21.

It is therefore believed to be clear that the new features of the present invention as defined in claim 21 can not be considered as obvious from a combination of the patents to Delf and Savage suggested by the Examiner.

Claim 26 has been amended to define only one spring element 16. Such an arrangement, in which only one spring element is supported on the one hand on the add-on part and on the other hand on the slaving element is not disclosed in any references applied by the Examiner and can not be derived from them as a matter of obviousness. A combination of the patents to Delf and to Savage would lead to a device in which at least two separate spring elements will be provided. The device defined in claim 26 is clearly illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 and described in a second paragraph on page 6 of the specification. In the beginning of fourth paragraph on page

6 it is stated that "the spring element 16 for axially securing the add-on part 10 to the slaving element 14 has a spring gap 46".

Claim 26 specifically defines the above mentioned one piece spring element and therefore this claim should be considered as allowable.

Turning now to claim 27, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's opinion about the features of this claim can not be considered as justified. The Examiner correctly stated that the patent to Delf does not have a positive form-locking engagement of the add-on part with the slaving element, in particular there is no direct contact between the add-on part and the slaving element. As can be clearly seen from Figure 2 and Figure 3 of the patent to Delf, between the add-on part and the slaving element on the one hand, in other words in the axial direction, the components 37 and 25 and 36 or 35 and 31 are arranged, and on the other hand, in other words in the radial direction the component 31 is located between the slaving element and the add-on part.

If a person of ordinary skill in the art replaced the components 37 and 25 and 36, or 35 and 21 by spring element disclosed in the patent to Savage, for which replacement as explained herein above there are no hint

or suggestion, this arrangement would not change. Also, in the combination of the teachings of the patents to Savage and Delf, the add-on part would have no positive form-locking engagement with the slaving element, there will be no direct contact of the add-on part and the slaving element as defined in claim 27. It should be also specifically mentioned that the disclosure of the patent to Delf clearly states that no direct contact between the add-on part and the slaving element must be provided, since a vibration transmission must be presented.

It is believed that the new features of the present invention as defined in claim 27 are not disclosed in the patents to Delf and Savage, can not be derived from their combination as a matter of obviousness.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to clarify why the element 37 of the patent to Delf must be a spring element or must belong to a spring element. The element 37 must have any springy properties and is not in direct cooperation with the elements 25 and 36. It is not possible and not acceptable to interpret this element as a component of a spring. Again in this case, this opinion can be considered as a hindsight consideration resulting from knowledge of the applicant's claimed invention, to interpret the washer 37 as a spring, in order to derive at a certain correspondence of the

prior art with the new features of the present invention. Such a hindsight, as well known, is not permissible.

It is therefore believed that the new features of the present invention which are defined in claims 21, 26 and 27 should be considered as patentably distinguishing the present invention from the prior art and should be allowed.

Claim 13, the broadest claim on file, has been also amended to define only one spring element, and therefore it is believed that this claim also patentably distinguishes the present invention from the prior art.

Since claims 14, 16, 17, 19, 20 as well as claims 22-25 depend on claim 13, they share its presumably allowable features and therefore they should be considered as allowable as well.


A device in which only one spring element 16 is provided as defined in the claims, is not disclosed in any of the references and can not be derived from any combination of the references, as was explained with respect to claim 26.

In view of the above presented remarks and amendments, it is believed that all claims currently on file should be considered as patentably distinguishing over the art and should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,



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